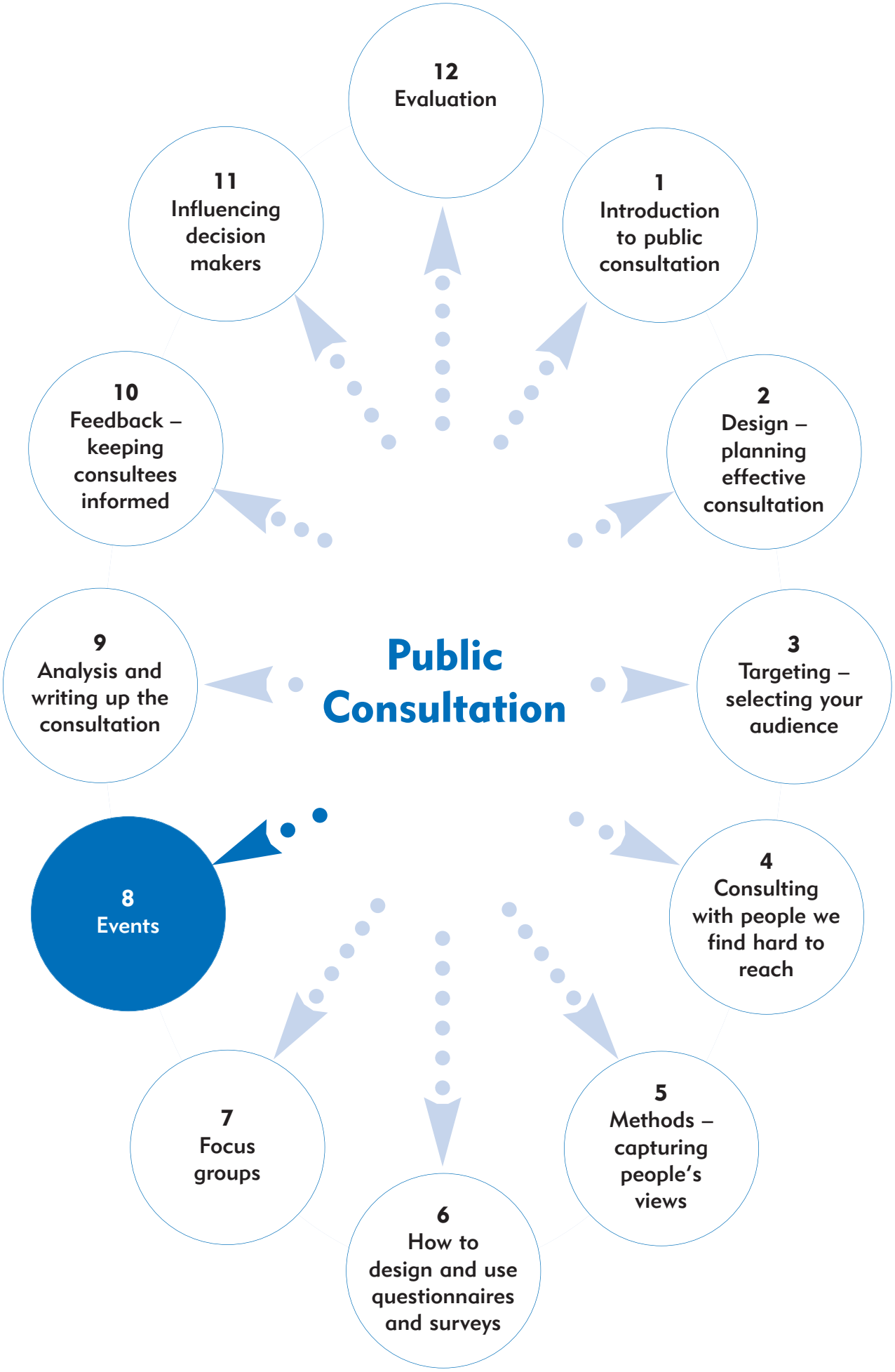
Nottinghamshire County Council

Consultation in Nottinghamshire
Events

guide **8**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Introduction

Events are an important opportunity for members of a community to get involved and have their say in public. A range of events can be arranged depending on the nature of the consultation and the intended audience.

Types of event

Matching the right event to the topic and audience is what makes all the efforts of planning an event successful. The choice of consultation methods depends on the audience targeted and the type of responses required to contribute effectively to decision-making.

If the topic is complex or innovative a relaxed atmosphere, where people are invited to view and listen, may be more appropriate. In this case an exhibition or an open day might be suitable, as it provides good access to information, long flexible hours of opening and an opportunity to feedback views to decision-makers.

Public meetings
An engaging method used to enable members of the public to gain further knowledge and understanding and express their opinions on a particular issue.

Community meetings
Community meetings are an opportunity for members of a local community to share information, gain further knowledge and express their opinions on the issues concerned. These can be followed-up with group discussions and feedback.

Local community or residents' groups
Local residents' groups are a generally well-recognised and established opportunity for members of a community to become involved in detailed and complex decisions at various stages of development.

Workshops
This method can be used for more complex policy driven questions and answers. This is an occasion where members of a community can get together to discuss a particular problem or the various issues and suggest options and ideas.

Conferences
This method can be used when major issues need discussing or resolution and where common ground needs to be achieved.

This is an exercise where stakeholders and the provider can gather to discuss conflicts and issues of concern.

Seminars
This is a formal opportunity to gather and listen to points of view and concepts. Time is provided for questions and answers. However, it is still a responsive meeting that can collect responses on issues from knowledgeable and experienced individuals.

Fun days
An excellent method where the public can find out more about what you propose and/or the services that are available. It is an opportunity to engage different sectors of the community. They provide a less serious/formal environment to introduce particular issues of concern.

Open days
Teams of voluntary staff are made available to answer questions, supply advice to participants and show what is available. It is a way of engaging the public and introducing new concepts and further information.

Roadshows
This is any event which can be provided and replicated from area to area. It may be in the form of a mobile display or a series of meetings.

Site visits
It is a good visual method for showing the public an idea, current or future development, in conjunction with another consultation method.

Selecting a venue

The public always find it easier to attend an event in a familiar local place rather than somewhere unknown or difficult to get to. Popular venues can however be booked up months in advance, so plan ahead.

Although some people are prepared to travel to an event, most are less inclined to travel further than a mile. Public transport helps but close proximity is more of a draw.

Stakeholders may be more inclined to attend events that involve a greater amount of travel but where an audience is required to travel additional incentives may be needed – such as a particularly interesting/prestigious venue, food and refreshments.

A venue needs to be culturally acceptable to the broadest range of people and religions. It is therefore best to select premises that are neutral unless a particular section of the community is the target. For example schools are neutral and are a common ground for many people from different backgrounds. Holding an event in a mosque might discourage some members of the general public from attending but it would be good for a consultation event with the Muslim community. Meetings in a venue where there is a bar selling alcohol on the other hand would not.

Always do a site visit to check out the location, accessibility, internal layout and advertised equipment and facilities. See 'things to check out before the day' on page 9.

In addition, always find a single point of contact for further arrangements. Take a note of their name, telephone and fax number, email address and the name of another colleague who may be able to help when the first point of contact is unavailable.

Time and date

A generous amount of time should be allowed to plan an event to make sure all aspects are right and the event runs smoothly. Once advertised, an event (unlike a leaflet or letter whose distribution can be delayed) is not easily postponed without loss of credibility, confidence and probably the booking fee.

The timescale required will vary depending on the size and complexity of the event.

It is sometimes difficult to identify one time when the whole of the target audience can make an event. Issues to consider are whether the audience is:

1. employed or has to commute
2. responsible for childcare
3. free at weekends
4. attracted by other coinciding events like religious festivals, sporting events and school holidays.

Time also needs to be allowed to produce the necessary paperwork or publicity material. Printed material may be needed to:

1. advertise the event for example using direct mail, leaflet, posters or the internet
2. provide information at the event itself, such as leaflets, brochures, programmes and posters
3. record responses from the audience, for example questionnaires or comment sheets.

Typical time required to produce and distribute materials

Brochure	10-12 weeks
Website	10-12 weeks
Leaflet	6-8 weeks
Questionnaire	6-8 weeks
Posters	2-8 weeks
Direct mail letters	2-3 weeks
Email	1-2 weeks

Arrangements with speakers and venues

Before fixing a date, make sure that the speakers and chair have been arranged and that they are available to attend. This is best done using an availability grid where a number of options are checked out at the same time so that the various dates can be compared.

Typical completed availability grid

	Possible dates and times for the event			
Venues and speakers	Date A	Date B	Date C	Date D
Venue A	✔		✔	
Venue B		✔	✔	✔
Speaker A	✔		✔	✔
Speaker B	✔		✔	
Chair	✔	✔		✔
Date selected	✔			

Include extra time to book interpreters, especially sign language interpreters where there is a national shortage.

Expenses

The need for any payments for speakers or other staff should always be identified in advance. This avoids later disagreements and allows the event to proceed without unnecessary incident.

A note of the policy governing travel and other expenses (including the requirement that they should be agreed in advance of the event itself) should be included in the written briefing to staff and volunteers prior to the event.

Publicity

All events need to be publicised.

Consider using text messaging - many deaf people and young people prefer this method of contact.

Local media
Most events have a local focus and local media will readily pick this up. However, they also like to focus on controversy and this may undermine the whole purpose of the consultation. The media like to report things that have happened or events where they can get a picture so try to include photo opportunities in any press release.

The corporate communications team have a number of props available that are ideal for photo opportunities such as a giant cheque, giant spade, scissors, key or calculator.

Inserts or flyers may have a higher readership than adverts and can be targeted better to parts of the total audience. They can also be used as leaflets for community groups and door-to-door distribution. Local papers are always keen to attract paid advertising and current costs and advice on services are readily available.

The County Councils recruitment and advertising team (advertising@nottscc.gov.uk) may be able to advise.

Another option is an advertorial, which is paid for advertising that looks like an article and can include pictures.

Internet
The internet is essentially a passive medium, so any advertising needs to be displayed for some time before it has any impact. The effectiveness of a website can be increased by establishing specific pages to act as community notice boards, so people know where to get information on what's going on and get into the habit of visiting them often for an update.

Dedicated consultation pages, regularly updated, on the Council website can also act as a focal point for advertising consultation events.

Posters
Posters are a conventional and highly effective means of reminding people of an event, its time and place. Oddly they are less effective at getting an audience to recognise the merits of attending unless they have experienced a similar event before and enjoyed it or they have been personally invited by other means.

Bus stops, shop windows, community notice boards and council buildings are excellent locations for posters. If members of the intended audience can be encouraged to put posters up in their own windows, all the better.

Banners
Banners are traditionally used to reassure the audience that they have come to the right place and to raise an interest in an event in its close proximity. They are usually displayed outside the venue, at other events and across well-used local streets.

Leaflets
Door-to-door leaflets are a cost effective means of advertising an event to a large audience.

Letters
Other than a personal visit or a phone call nothing works as well as a personally addressed letter from the organiser or other notable to an individual member of the intended audience. Letters will almost always trigger an immediate consideration of attendance and the checking of diaries – so they need to be simply crafted and display the necessary information clearly.

The most common mistake in drafting letters to large numbers of recipients is that they should never be addressed to the audience generally – they work much better if either addressed to an individual recipient or written like it is addressed to an individual recipient. 'You' should always be used in the singular and 'Dear resident' used rather than 'Dear residents' (or similar) where the recipients name is unknown. Letters are a personal medium and should appear as a private correspondence between one person and another (no matter how many identical letters are produced).

Room layout and floor plan

Make it easy for participants to move around the area. Include some busy areas and quiet areas. Noisy areas, such as main halls and dining areas should be located away from lounge areas and seminar rooms.

Displays and exhibitors should be located in high-usage and foot-fall areas, for example near the main entrance.

Well-positioned seats and tables are crucial and several standard layouts are available to suit most occasions:

Style	Description	Notes
1 Theatre	The audience is sat in rows, sometimes with tables, facing the chairperson.	Good for presentations to large groups, formal events, and those where physical movement is unnecessary.
2 Horse-shoe (U)	Table based layout with the open part of the U facing the chairpersons/speakers.	Good for medium-sized participative meetings and those requiring a debate mediated by the chairperson.
3 Board-room	One large rectangular table with chairman at one end and participants spread around it.	Good for smaller meetings and those requiring detailed discussion and agreement.
4 Cabaret	The audience is sat around several large tables generally facing toward the front.	Good for reading event documentation, making notes, group discussions and networking.

Whatever the layout, make sure that everyone can see screens and flip charts properly – it is usually best to actually sit in the chairs to check. Ensure that there is enough space for participants who are wheelchair users.

Tent cards can be useful if tables are used (as are badges at any event). It is important to allow people to identify who everyone else is, to assist in breaking the ice and help them to gain more from networking opportunities.

Be prepared for participants who are visually impaired and unable to read screens and flip charts.

Technical support

At any event involving audio-visual or other equipment, it is useful (and often essential) to have technical support. If it isn't available on site throughout the day then relevant contact numbers need to be secured in advance and a prior 'walk through' arranged so that you can be satisfied that everything will run smoothly.

Budget

It is important to remember that in addition to the hire of the venue there will be other costs, such as catering, equipment hire, printing and distributing pre-publicity and consultation material on the day and possibly additional staff costs. These costs are considerable and will often be at least as much as the venue hire.

Things to check out before the day

Accessibility
Everybody should be able to use a building or visit an event as consultees, employees or volunteers. Buildings where special arrangements have to be made, such as a separate entrance or reception point for disabled people, should be avoided wherever possible.

Using inclusive buildings benefit everybody. Level access to and throughout a building helps not only people with mobility difficulties, but staff making deliveries, staff setting up an event and consultees getting there.

Car parking
Designated accessible parking and a pick up/set down point for public transport should be provided for staff and consultees within 50 metres of their main entrances to the venue. Any barrier systems or ticket machines should be positioned appropriately and at the right height for wheelchair users to get close enough to use them and be accessible to people with sensory impairments.

The key requirements for parking bays are:

- designated spaces for disabled visitors and employees with appropriate surface painted markings and upright signage
- sufficient space for disabled people to enter or leave their vehicle and use the boot or a side or rear hoist for wheelchairs
- a location as close as possible to the main entrance and where disabled people do not have to pass behind other parked cars or cross moving traffic
- no adjacent kerb, a suitable, level surface that is well lit.

Approach routes
External areas to the main entrances should be:

- free of vehicular traffic or provided with pedestrian crossing points identified by blister paving
- level if possible. Where the whole or part of the approach route has a gradient of 1:20 or less
- sufficiently wide for access; 1800mm in width is preferable, 1200mm the minimum
- surfaced in an even, well-maintained and non-slippery material so that there are few hazards for visually impaired people and it is suitable for wheelchairs to pass over
- clearly defined by aural, visual and tactile information, for example, a paved route over a large gravel forecourt. Good lighting with no deep shadows will help all visitors to identify the route and entrance at night or in poor weather conditions
- free of potential hazards such as overhanging vegetation, litterbins, A-boards, posts and planters. Permanent features should be clearly marked with contrasting bands, or a solid barrier detectable by cane users, and textured paving will warn those with visual impairments.

External ramps and steps
A level approach isn't always achievable and both external ramps and steps may be needed. Ramps are accessible to many mobility-impaired people but they are not always the safest or easiest option for those on foot. If the gradient of a ramp is steeper than 1:20 easy-going steps should also be provided.

The key requirements are:

- rest areas and adequate manoeuvring space for wheelchair users to open doors or stop without rolling back down a slope
- visual and tactile indication of the presence and direction of a ramped surface

- visual and tactile warnings at the head of a flight of steps and clear nosing (different coloured edging to steps)
- easy to grip handrails that provide secure support on both sides of ramps of gradients steeper than 1:20 and on flights of more than two steps.

Entrance
Entrances should have a level area measuring at least 1500 x 1500mm clear of the door swing and be level to give wheelchair users a clear approach and room to manoeuvre.

If double doors are used there needs to be enough space in the lobby to enable a wheelchair user to move clear of one door swing and push open the next door or reverse to pull it open.

Any doormats should be clearly visible and fitted flush with other floor coverings in a well or fixed firmly to the floor so that it cannot slip.

Internal doors
Ideally there should be as few internal doors as possible in public areas of a building. Doors need to be easy and safe to use – sliding doors are the most accessible solution for a broad range of people and reduce the amount of space required in entrance lobbies. Otherwise check the means of opening, dimensions, handles, and appearance and make sure:

- there is enough width to allow people in wheelchairs and with assistance dogs to pass through
- there is a space next to the leading edge of the door to allow a wheelchair user to manoeuvre into position to use the handle and open it
- there are see through panels in solid doors to avoid collisions and glass doors are marked appropriately
- handles and other door furniture are clearly contrasted, easy to use by people with manual dexterity difficulties and at a height accessible to wheelchair users (900–1100mm)
- for power assisted doors, a clearly visible operating button and tactile element. If a manually operated door is the only option, it should be outward opening with an easy action
- clear operating instructions such as push/pull signs or arrows indicating the direction of opening of automatic, hinged and sliding doors
- doors which need to remain closed for fire control should have electrically powered hold open or swing free closing devices, and preferably closing mechanisms that are only activated in emergencies.

Reception and service points
The reception area sets the tone for an event. It is likely to be a busy and potentially confusing environment for many people and should be located as near to the main entrance as possible. Other key requirements are:

- a level area free from obstacles
- seating
- good lighting
- clear signage and information.

At least a section of the desk on both sides should be at an accessible height for visitors or staff members who use wheelchairs. If not all service points can be fully accessible, one should be accessible to people with both physical and sensory impairments and its location must be clearly indicated.

Internal circulation and signage
People should be able to locate easily the areas, rooms, services or facilities that they wish to use and be able to move around them easily.

Accessible information and signage allows people to choose a suitable route and identify points within the venue where they can get assistance or information to assist them during their visit.

Provide clear signs, internally and externally, to all entrances, service and activity areas, rooms, lifts, toilets, refreshments including temporary signs identifying key areas for the event itself. Accessible emergency exits must be clearly indicated on signage and plans.

Corridors and passageways should be level to enable free movement between areas. They should be easy to navigate, free from obstructions and wide enough to allow passing and turning space for wheelchair users.

Corridors should be well-lit with non-slip surfaces that provide contrast between walls, floors and ceiling and features on the walls.

Ideally all internal spaces should be sound proofed and without echoes.

Vertical movement
Wherever possible events should be held on a single level to avoid the inevitable confusion that happens when people have to negotiate their way between activities on different floors or levels.

When a single level cannot be used, the requirements for internal ramps, stairs and steps and accompanying handrails are similar to those for external ramps and stairs. A passenger lift is the most accessible means of moving people between levels in a building. If this cannot be accommodated, a platform lift or a wheelchair platform stairlift are alternatives for people with mobility impairments.

The key requirements for lifts include:

- ➔ call controls with a tactile element, placed at an accessible height for wheelchair users
- ➔ sufficient space and time for wheelchair users and people with assistance dogs to enter and leave the lift
- ➔ an obvious and accessible emergency communication system
- ➔ audio and visual indications of the levels reached and direction of movement.

In emergencies
Accessible escape routes for disabled people are a key part of every evacuation strategy and staff training should be given in providing appropriate assistance. Be prepared and brief your staff. Specific site advice can be obtained from the fire authority.

Key considerations are:

- ➔ level ground floor emergency exit routes, clearly signed that are accessible to wheelchair users
- ➔ how disabled people escape from upper floors – fire safe lifts, protected staircases, corridors or lobbies and managed refuge areas that are clearly marked, facing the escape route and with a communication link, where disabled people can wait for assistance
- ➔ alarm systems that are accessible to deaf, hard of hearing and deaf blind people (i.e. visual or vibrating and audible alarms).

Refreshment and retail areas
The accessibility of refreshment, café and shop areas is often overlooked particularly if they are externally managed. Key requirements are:

- ➔ unimpeded access for wheelchair users to low level display units and service points
- ➔ furniture layout that is navigable by visually impaired people and allows choice of seating and sufficient space for wheelchair users and their companions in eating areas

- crockery, cutlery and other fittings appropriate to the needs of a people with a broad range of disabilities, including manual dexterity difficulties
- labelling of shop goods and menus in large, clear print.

Toilets
A wheelchair accessible unisex toilet cubicle should be available. The standards for size, fittings and layout are outlined in BS8300 2001.

Standard toilets can also be adapted to be more accessible to people with sensory impairments, learning difficulties, lack of tactile sensitivity, dexterity problems through:

- clearly visible signage
- toilet cubicle doors and taps that are operable by people with limited strength and manual dexterity difficulties
- doors with an emergency release mechanism so that they can be opened outwards and from the outside if necessary
- an emergency communication cord and easy reset alarm system where there will be response from staff.

Lighting and sound
Rooms need to be clearly and evenly lit, without shadows or glare, and well maintained. Where possible, natural light should be available. Lighting should be sufficient to see the presentations and to be able to read any paperwork supplied.

Venues should provide good acoustics, induction loops or inductive couplers on telephone handsets. Echo effects or overspill of sounds from other areas, noisy heating or ventilation systems and background music should be minimised to assist people with hearing impairments.

A hearing enhancement system such as an induction loop should be provided at the main reception desk, together with appropriate signage to indicate its presence. Staff should be trained for its use. Plain walls behind reception staff assist lip readers and people with visual impairments to communicate more effectively.

Audio guides should be provided at exhibitions, open days and roadshows. Taped messages, smell, tactile surfaces, audible instructions supporting plans and audio guides may also be useful to assist visually impaired people find their way around buildings.

Presentations
All participants must be able to hear and see the presentation and discussion with clear and unrestricted sight lines.

Flexible seating arrangements for wheelchair users and their companions or people with assistance dogs can be achieved by creating space at the end of a row at various levels in ranked seating. Some reserved spaces should also be available at the front for people who need them.

Microphones and perhaps roving microphones should be available for the audience to participate fully.

Recording facilities may be required in which case signs should be displayed to explain recording will occur and an early announcement made to the same effect.

Provide accessible presentation facilities for disabled speakers.

Display materials and accompanying text should be on well contrasting backgrounds, avoiding shadows, reflection and glare. Consider the use of two and three-dimensional displays of objects, images and printed information and interactive exhibits and audio-visual presentations.

Encourage presenters to provide subtitles on audio-visual presentations and to use clear print guidelines. (see guide 4)

Other technical requirements

- The venue must be well heated but not overheated (a room temperature of around 18°C is ideal).
- Tape extension leads and loose wiring to the floor.
- Test all equipment before the event so that there is as little interference as possible on the day.
- Provide appropriate resting and exercise space and the provision of water bowls for assistance dogs, especially if the event is a long one.

Arrangements on the day

On the day of the event, where possible, provide staff or volunteers outside the venue to meet, greet and guide consultees to the right place.
Allow 20 to 30 minutes (depending on the attendance) for the public to arrive and settle. Reserve a few seats near the entrance for late arrivals. Something should always be laid on to avoid earlybirds going off the boil and losing interest while they wait for others to arrive. Food, including perhaps continental breakfasts or pastries, coffee and tea works best but should always be supported by displays, bookshops and early demonstrations that can add some intellectual interest. The 'meeters and greeters' can also help to introduce everyone and make sure they feel at home and allow networking opportunities to be maximised.

Breaks and refreshments should be frequent enough to keep the audience stimulated and talking amongst themselves – they are the oil that lubricates a good event.

The longer the meeting, the longer the breaks participants should have. Unless people are participating and fully involved, their concentration begins to drop after just 45 minutes and breaks, or other changes in pace or routine, are needed to reflect this.

Coffee breaks don't have to be 20 minutes long. Five minutes to refresh cups or glasses, stretch legs or move from one layout to another will help keep people attentive. Better still is a chance to talk, ask questions, or move within the business of the event.

Bigger audiences are likely to require longer breaks (particularly for refreshments or toilets).

Questions and answers

Question and answer sessions are good for the providers and audience. They allow people to express their primary concerns and allow you to judge how closely you are meeting them. Done early enough, they provide an opportunity to reorder the event to better address the key issues.

- Prepare answers to possible questions.
- Forewarn them a little in advance that questions are invited.
- Give people time to think about what they would like to ask.
- Always answer questions slowly and clearly.
- Be prepared for angry remarks (being prepared to answer tough questions and willing to hear dissident points of view will help reduce potential cause of conflict).

Capturing what people think

The aim of a public participation event is to inform the public, involve them and capture their opinions and views.

Opportunities should be given for attendees to participate and have their say. Non-attendees can be encouraged to respond, say with a reply slip or telephone contact details on any invitation letter.

At the event itself questionnaires, comment sheets and feedback forms are effective but often underrated means of gathering views. Participants should be given clear instructions about why personal information is being asked for (so that feedback can be given) and that it will only be used for the purposes of the consultation.

Questions and answer sessions and the free-flow of debate may be interesting but they are usually very difficult to record objectively without losing most of what was interesting about them. Audio and video records can be made but these tend to make the event too formal and can be seen as intrusive. Events are best for providing opportunities for people to get together, talk and express their views, capturing the views expressed, although important, need not be the primary focus.

Participants often report that an opportunity to network, meet decision-makers and other affected parties and tell them what they think directly is more important than any formal record of the event – partly because people have a low expectation that their views will be listened to. Involvement is more important and participants may be more satisfied with the opportunity to hold decision makers to account while other methods of consultation are relied on to capture their views.

If the consultation is for an equality impact assessment (Service Diversity Review - SDR) ensure it is recorded.

Feedback and follow-up

Events are often difficult to follow-up because the actual audience may have been unknown prior to registration, the register may be incomplete and because the range of issues covered may be too great to simplify.

But where possible, attendance at an event marked so that it is clear the Council is keen to have local people involved in its decision-making. Those registering should be asked how they would like to receive feedback and made aware of any data protection implications. All participants requesting feedback must receive it.

A simple letter to participants with a copy of any report that is produced on the event would be a suitable thank you. Copies should appear on the Council's consultation database and in any newsletter to the audience.

A good rule of thumb is to mark the event in any regular publication or media that was used to advertise it. Guests and speakers should also be thanked.

As in any consultation, feedback needs to be given both when the results and the outcome are known. It is also useful to call participants back to another event to discuss the implications of any outcome – thus securing an ongoing relationship with those with a particular interest.

Appendix 1
Planning checklist

Item	Done	Comments	Date
Goals and objectives			
Desired outcomes			
Event type			
Target audience			
Speakers guide			
Agenda			
Venue			
Map and directions			
Loading/unloading access			
Advertising/publicity			
Posters and banners			
Direct mail			
Leaflets and brochures			
Materials for the event (including attendance list and data protection statement)			
Reference material for questions			
Equipment list (including AV, notepaper, pens, badges)			
Staff			
Catering and refreshment			

Appendix 2
Personnel and job descriptions

Chairperson
Successful events are well organised and well chaired. Having an experienced chair makes a real difference and they should be encouraged to use their ability and discretion to improve on the draft programme. Ideally the chair should be independent of the Council and able to:

- speak clearly and act with authority
- judge character and react appropriately to control changes of temperament in the audience (they must also be able to deal with unreasonable behaviour)
- grasp and explain the issues to be discussed
- remain unbiased and fair
- ensure that the audience is comfortable and can see and hear the sessions.

The chair should be briefed in advance so they fully understand the purpose of the event. Timings, a list of event sessions and speakers must be included in this briefing.

At any event, someone needs to provide leadership and consistency throughout. This is normally the role of the chair.

Facilitators
If an event involves participants breaking into smaller groups during the day then additional staff should be allocated in advance to the roles that will be needed to ensure these sub-groups perform well.

Speakers
Speakers should be given joining instructions prior to the event. These should reiterate the purpose of the event, their role within it, the length of time they will be expected to speak and any other activities (such as question and answer or panel discussion) that they may be asked to participate in.

Details of how to get there and how long it takes should also be provided.

Contact details should always be exchanged, so that if speakers are delayed alternative arrangements can be considered.

Event organiser/manager
Usually the team leader for an event is responsible for ensuring that everything in the run up to the event runs smoothly.

On the day itself, the organiser may step into the background leaving the event to the chair. Or they may become a key speaker and participant.

Event executives
An event executive would work alongside the event organiser/manager throughout the planning process and support the chair on the day itself. Their job is to assist with the groundwork; research, chase orders, rent equipment if required and hire voluntary or paid staff. On the day of the event, their role is to assist the chair and ensure that the programme is running as it should (checking on refreshments, guiding participants to break out rooms).

Appendix 3

Top 10 tips when chairing a meeting

1. Be friendly and welcoming. Check everyone has the right equipment to participate, for example induction loop working.

2. Explain early on why you are holding the event and how you intend to run it. Explain the 'housekeeping' rules – fire exits, toilets and so on.

3. Get the audience's buy-in to the format and any early questions about the purpose sorted as soon as possible.

4. Keep to the advertised times particularly the start time (allowing an extra 10 minutes for stragglers is fine if people are disrupting the start by coming in to sit down but otherwise it disrespects those that attended at the right time).

5. If the event has several parts, provide a programme as people enter so they can decide what they want to participate in.

6. Keep an attendance list for names and addresses and encourage everyone to sign it (not least to provide them with feedback).

7. Give people a chance to talk as early as possible, so the event better reflects what the audience wants.

8. Ensure that breaks are provided and that you finish no later than scheduled. Don't make any event too long.

9. Have a clear message that you want all attendees to take away with them (even if it is just that the Council values their views and is open to influence).

10. Thank attendees and those who helped to organise and run the meeting.

Appendix 4
Statutory requirements

The following statutory obligations apply to the holding of public events as do the Council's corporate standards and protocols.

Health and Safety

Public buildings

- All events must comply with the published Health and Safety Policy under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Contact your departments Health and Safety Manager for queries and advice.
- Personal injuries at a public event should be covered by the Council's insurance policies.

Private building or location

- The venue provider must have adequate public liability insurance and a risk assessment has been carried out.
- All goods and services bought are fit for their intended purpose.
- Conditions on serving food or beverages (alcoholic or otherwise) will vary between district councils. Check with the relevant environmental health and trading standards teams.

Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) protects disabled people in their access to goods, facilities and services. Since 2004 it has been a statutory requirement for local authorities to make 'reasonable adjustments' to overcome physical barriers to access. Details of what this could include are included in guide 4 – 'Consulting with people we find hard to reach'.

The Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act 1988 (DPA) covers private and public sector organisations in the UK. In essence, this Act requires that you take sufficient steps to ensure that any information you collect on an individual at a public event is only used for the original purpose it was collected. Effective from 1 January 2005, the Freedom of Information Act amended the Data Protection Act, meaning that an individual now not only has the right to view any information you hold relating to them, but also to correct this information if inaccurate or to have it removed or destroyed.

Equality Act

The Equality Act 2007 provides protection against discrimination on grounds of race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, age and gender. In all areas of service and employment, public bodies, including the Council, also have to equality proof all services, procedures and policies by carrying out equality impact assessments, Service Diversity Reviews (SDRs); involving and consulting customers in all decisions made.

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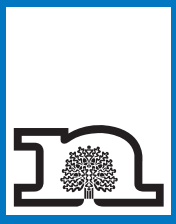
Nottinghamshire County Council's consultation standards

1. A consultation mandate should be completed and approved by your departmental co-ordinator/ champion before the start of any consultation. *(Guides 2 and 11)*
2. The consultation should be logged on the County Council's consultation database. *(Guides 2, 10 and 11)*
3. For key decisions a public engagement plan should be published with the forward plan. *(Guides 2 and 11)*
4. In planning a consultation, the specific communication needs of groups and individuals who are often otherwise excluded should be considered. *(Guides 3 and 4)*
5. A minimum of 12 weeks should be allowed for consultation on major decisions. *(Guide 2)*
6. The name, address and contact number of the person responsible for the consultation should be published on all consultation materials. *(Guides 2 and 10)*
7. The consultation material should make clear by what date responses are required, in what format and to whom they should be sent. *(Guides 2 and 6)*
8. The consultation should include a face-to-face element where consultees are able to meet, question and put their views to the decision-maker(s). *(Guides 4, 5, 7 and 8)*
9. Any venue selected for a consultation event should meet the Council's accessibility code. *(Guides 4 and 8)*
10. Any complaints about the consultation, questions asked, materials or time allowed should be noted in the consultation report. *(Guides 9, 10 and 11)*
11. A notice of decision should be published for each consultation. *(Guides 10 and 11)*
12. Feedback regarding the responses, the Council's decision and how the consultation influenced it should be given to consultees. *(Guides 4, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12)*



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